DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 688 PS 016 773

TITLE America's Child Care Needs: The 1987 AFSCME National Secretaries Week Opinion Poll.
INSTITUTION American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 22 Apr 87
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care; Delivery Systems; *Employed Parents; *Employee Attitudes; *Federal Government; *Government Role; Middle Class; National Surveys; Needs Assessment; Opinions; Social Problems

ABSTRACT

A nationwide poll of 600 working Americans indicated extensive support for increased child care programs and for government policies that support and expand child care for working parents. Responses suggested that (1) the greatest support for increased child care comes from middle-class families and workers; (2) the need for improvements and expansion of services is recognized by those currently using child care; (3) many young parents' satisfaction with child care arrangements is limited by concerns about cost, quality, and availability; (4) inadequate child care services affect employment and promotion opportunities. Respondents extensively supported strict and uniform standards for the licensing of child care facilities, and an expansion of public school services to include a full day of optional child care during kindergarten. Other results showed that 12 percent of working parents with children under age 6 in child care have child care funded wholly or partially by their employer, and fully 36 percent of parents with children in child care prefer a more flexible work schedule in order to make more convenient child care arrangements. It is concluded that employers and the government are not responding adequately to child care needs, and that a national strategy is needed. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED285688

AMERICA'S CHILD CARE NEEDS

The 1987 AFSCME National Secretaries Week OPINION POLL

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Diana Rock
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

For Release
Wednesday, April 22, 1987

PS 016773

AFSCME
in the public service

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AFSCME®

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
1625 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone (202) 429-1000
Telex 89-2376

Gerald W. McEntee
President

William Lucy
Secretary Treasurer

Vice Presidents

Ronald C. Alexander
Columbus, Ohio

Dominic J. Badolato
Berlin, Conn.

Joseph Bolt
Richmond, Ind.

Joseph M. Bonavita
Boston, Mass.

Robert A. Brindza
Columbus, Ohio

Ernest B. Crofoot
Baltimore, Md.

Steve Culen
Chicago, Ill.

Lawrence V. DeCresce
Columbus, Ohio

Albert A. Diop
New York, N.Y.

Danny Donohue
Hauppauge, N.Y.

James Glass
Lansing, Mich.

Victor Gotbaum
New York, N.Y.

Blondie P. Jordan
Orlando, Fla.

Edward J. Keller
Harrisburg, Pa.

Joseph J. Kreuser
Menomonee Falls, Wisc.

Faye D. Krohn
Kasota, Minn.

Marilyn LeClaire
Columbiaville, Mich.

George Masten
Olympia, Wash.

Joseph E. McDermott
Albany, N.Y.

William L. McGowan
Albany, N.Y.

Donald G. McKee
Des Moines, Iowa

Jack Merkel
Trenton, N.J.

Russell K. Okata
Honolulu, Hawaii

George E. Popyack
Redwood City, Calif.

Bettye W. Roberts
New York, N.Y.

Earl Stout
Philadelphia, Pa.

Garland W. Webb
Baton Rouge, La.

Maynard White
Houston, Texas

This nationwide survey of 600 working Americans was conducted by the Boston-based polling firm of Marttila & Kiley between April 8-11 for AFSCME. The survey is being released during National Secretaries Week to pinpoint a growing need among millions of working parents for adequate child-care facilities.

The AFSCME poll indicates overwhelming support for increased child-care programs and for government policies which support and expand child-care for working parents. The poll also indicates that the greatest support for increased child-care comes from middle-class families and workers earning $20,000-$30,000 a year. For example, in response to the statement that "The government should develop policies to help make child-care services more available and affordable," by a margin of 80 percent to 16 percent, workers earning between $20,000-$30,000 a year agreed on the need for stepped-up child-care programs.

The survey also details the need for improvements and an expansion of services among those currently utilizing child-care.

For too many young parents, satisfaction with child-care arrangement is limited by concerns about one of three important aspects: cost; quality; or availability. Four in ten complain either that they cannot afford the services they now use, or are precluded by cost from using other desirable services. Nearly three in ten parents (28 percent) suffer from the fear that quality of care and individual attention their child receives is inadequate. And, fully 42 percent complain the child-care services they need are either over-subscribed or simply unavailable.

The poll also documents the effect that inadequate child-care services has on getting a job and earning a promotion. Fully 28 percent of all working parents with children 12 and under have given up a job or a promotion becuase of lack of child-care.

Working Americans, with or without children, overwhelmingly support strict and uniform standards for the licensing of child-care facilities (74 percent), and an expansion of public school services to include a full day of optional child-care during kindergarten (72 percent).

Among working parents with children under the age of six in some sort of child-care, only 12 percent have child-care funded wholely or partially by their employer.

Finally, among parents with children using child-care, fully 36 percent would prefer a more flexible work schedule in order to make more convenient child-care arrangements.

Child-care has developed into one of the most important workplace and family-related issues of the 1980s. In the process, a significant portion of working parents are foregoing jobs and promotional opportunities because of inadequacies in the current system. Employers and the government are not responding adequately to child-care needs. We need to design a national strategy to meet the child-care needs of millions of Americans.

I want to ask you a few questions about child-care. First, is it your impression that there are enough child-care facilities in this country to provide for current needs, or that there are not enough child-care facilities?

Enough	26%
Not Enough	53
(Not Sure)	21

In general, do you feel that we should be encouraging the development of more child-care services and options to assist working parents in this country, or that we should not be encouraging the development of more child-care services?

Encouraging	79%
Not Be Encouraging	11
(Not Sure)	9

Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Because these days both parents in a household usually need or want to work at the same time they raise their families, the government should develop policies to help make child-care services more available and affordable for these people.

Agree	71%
Disagree	23
(Not Sure)	6

Now I'm going to mention several proposals for dealing with child-care. Please tell me whether you are inclined to favor or oppose each one.

	Favor	Oppose	(Not Sure)
a. Create strict, uniform standards for licensing all child-care facilities, even though it would raise the cost of services somewhat	74%	20	6
b. Expand public school services to include a full-day of optional child-care during kindergarten	72%	22	6
c. Require employers to permit fathers as well as mothers to take up to 18 weeks of optional unpaid leave from work following the birth or adoption of a child	62%	33	5
d. Expand public school services to include optional child-care before and after school for elementary level students	68%	24	7

ALL RESPONDENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX:

Which of these arrangements describes the way you handle your child-care needs?

a. Your spouse stays home with your child.....27%

b. You and your spouse work different hours in order to care for your child.....17

c. A church-sponsored child-care center..... 5

d. A commercial non-profit child-care center..... 7

e. A child-care center at your company..... 4

f. A babysitter at your home..... 8

g. A babysitter at the babysitter's home..... 9

h. A relative or friend caring for the child at your home..... 5

i. A relative or friend caring for the child at their home.....10

j. A nursery school..... 8

k. A kindergarten..... 4

l. Other:_____ (Specify) 3

(Not Sure)..... 1

Young Parents With Children Under Six Using Child-Care Arrangements:

Is your child-care arrangement one that costs money or is it an informal arrangement that does not involve the exchange of money? (IF COSTS MONEY:) Does your employer or your spouse's employer pay all or part of that cost?

Cost Money

Employer pays all.... 9%

Employer pays part... 3

Spouse employer pays all..... 7

Spouse employer pays part..... 3

Employer does not pay.....58

Doesn't Cost Money...20%

I'm going to read some complaints or concerns about child care that other parents have mentioned to us. For each one I mention, please tell me if that statement applies to you.

	Applies
The child-care options we have are very limited -- I feel I don't have much of a choice	34%
I am paying more for child-care than I can comfortably afford	29
There are no child-care services my spouse or I like that are conveniently located	25
The only child-care services available to us are too expense for us to use	23
I am concerned that the quality of care my child receives is not as high as it should be	20
I'm concerned that our child does not get enough individual attention	18
The child-care services we now use are inconveniently located	12
Because of over-demand, we were not able to get our first choice for child-care arrangements	12

Percent of those who say that the quality of their child's care is not as good as it should be.....28%

Percent of those who say that child-care costs are the main obstacle to attaining or keeping desired child-care services.....39

Percent who complain that the child care services they need are not available.....42

ALL RESPONDENTS WITH CHILDREN BOTH UNDER 6 AND 6 to 12:

Have you ever given up a new job opportunity or a promotion because you were unable to obtain the child-care services you felt you would need in order to take it?	Yes, Job.....13% Yes, Promotion... 5 No.....82
Are you a single parent?	Yes.....16% No.....84

No:

Who has primary responsibility for dealing with the day-to-day child care needs and arrangements, you, your spouse, or both equally?

- You.....22%
- Your Spouse.....21
- Both Equally.....57

Has your spouse had to give up a job or promotion because of a lack of available child care services?

- Yes..... 9%
- Yes, Promotion..... 2
- No.....89

Is your spouse working now?

- Yes.....72%
- No.....28

IF NO:

Would he/she be working now if you had better and more convenient child care services available to you?

- Yes.....27%
- No.....68

How satisfied are you with the policies your employer has that deal with child care needs--very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, less than satisfied or not at all satisfied?

- Very Satisfied.....23%
- Somewhat Satisfied..23
- Less Than Satisfied. 7
- Not At All Satisfied.....20
- (Not Sure).....26

If you could, would you shift to a more flexible work schedule in your present job in order to have more convenient child care arrangements, or not?

- Yes.....36%
- No.....64

IF YES:

Do you feel you could work a more flexible schedule and still be as productive and valuable an employee as you are now?

- Yes.....85%
- No.....15

WOMEN ONLY:

Were you working when you had your last baby? (IF YES:) Did you return to the same job or a different job?

Was working:

- Same Job.....51%
- Different Job.....11
- Was not working.....38

EVERYONE:

Which of these opinions is closer to yours: Employers should offer limited child care benefits, because these benefits are extremely expensive and are only important to a small number of workers.....21%

-OR-

Employers should offer a wide range of child care benefits and services, because it's a very effective way to hold onto talented employees, especially women.....66

(Not Sure).....13